FACT SHEET

EPA Region 7

South 4th Street Site
Clear Lake, Iowa **November 1999**

INTRODUCTION

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will begin field work to investigate ground water contamination at the South 4th Street site in Clear Lake, Iowa. Ground water contaminated with perchloroethylene (PCE) has been identified in downtown Clear Lake on the east side of First Avenue South between South 4th Street and South 3rd Street in an area of businesses and residences. This fact sheet provides an update of site activities.

SITE BACKGROUND

PCE was found in the ground water in November 1998, during a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment conducted for the Clear Lake Bakery. Ground water samples were taken from temporary monitoring wells located on the bakery garage property next to the alley, which runs between the bakery property and the Cottage Cleaners property. No PCE was found in soil samples taken in the same area. In March 1999, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) sampled ground water from a monitoring well located on the west side of the bakery garage and found PCE present. IDNR referred the site to EPA earlier this year.

PCE, also known as tetrachloroethylene or PERC, is a chlorinated hydrocarbon solvent commonly used in dry-cleaning fluid, spot removers, and degreasers. Effects of PCE on human health depend on how much PCE is present and the length and frequency of exposure. Effects also depend on the health of a person when exposure occurs.

SITE ACTIVITIES

EPA is conducting work at the site under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), also known as Superfund. EPA will begin taking soil, ground water, and storm sewer and sediment samples at the site the first week of November. The purpose of the sampling is to determine the extent and the source of the contamination and whether the contamination could potentially affect any private or municipal wells. No drinking water wells are known to be impacted by the contamination at this time.

Many of the samples will be collected using a Geoprobe®. The track-mounted Geoprobe® pushes three-foot long sections of pipe into the ground to collect soil and ground water samples. After the

sampling is completed, the holes will be plugged with a clay mixture. EPA will also have its mobile laboratory onsite to analyze samples. Workers conducting the sampling may wear hard hats and protective suits, if necessary. The field work is expected to be completed within two weeks.

EPA will review the information from the field work and determine whether further action is required at the site.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you have questions about this fact sheet or need additional information regarding this site, please contact:

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